42: Vanoverbergh F-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

846 776 know how to keep *Talomásim* at a distance, in the case of this nameless spirit they are absolutely powerless: the only way for a young Isneg mother to avoid him is to stay in the house at night.

846 372 Fire (*apúy*) plays a very important role whenever a new Isneg citizen has been born on our planet. Leaving aside the question of the place of the mother near the hearth of the house which has just been mentioned, I should like to draw attention to the following:

1. Although, even under ordinary circumstances, the fire of the hearth is rarely extinguished completely, it is of paramount importance that it should not be let go out for a single moment during the whole period that immediately follows the birth of a child, which period lasts until the mother has recovered sufficient strength to move around freely, in fact, I believe, as long as the mother has to sleep near the hearth at night.

2. At least on the first day, that is before the child is one day old, it is absolutely forbidden for anybody to take fire or firebrands (*alitán*) from the hearth: this is strictly taboo (*kanuáw*).

3. No alien fire may be brought inside the house on that day.

4. Three other taboos have also probably to do with the respect shown to fire on such an occasion: again at least during the first day, it is strictly forbidden to use green bamboos (*namáta ńa bólo*) to feed the fire. The same prohibition is extended to the passing of green leaves over the fire in order to soften them: this is very often done with young banana leaves, young palm leaves, etc. that will be used for packing and other purposes; the fire renders them very supple and easily pliable, in such a way preventing them from splitting at every turn. A third taboo concerns anything green (*namáta*), not dry: nothing of the kind is allowed to be brought into the house. Should any of these three taboos be infringed, the Isneg firmly believe that the baby will become thin and emaciated, it will be *malandtan*.

753 856

844 A woman in childbed, wherever she be situated inside the house, is assisted by all women who belong to the same household, and even little girls are allowed to witness the birth of a child. Experienced old women of the neighborhood are called in to take the lion's share in bringing the event to a happy issue, in some places always, in others whenever the inmates of the house prove incapable of the task or when the mother has much difficulty in bringing forth her baby. Midwives are called *mańa-lón* in Isneg.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

Anything fragrant, as pineapples, etc.; also cakes, native Isneg sweets, on account of their fragrance, lest her weakness increase.

She is also forbidden to eat any kind of fish for three days after the birth of her child If both she and her child have enjoyed good health so far, she is allowed to partake of it, after the third night provided it as cooked outside the house and brought in only art it had cooled down. Should she infringe any of these taboos, she liable to become sick, which in this case is called *maḍawig*.

All Isneg parents are very anxious to give the head of their babe the right shape: so, if the little poll is much too markedly oblong, the grandmother or, in her absence, any other woman lightly presses one of her heels (*túmaṅ*) against its soft part, on top, while the little patient is sprawling on the floor; this is called *tumńán* (past tense: *sinúmaṅ*; from *túmaṅ*, "heel"; in Iloko, *túmeṅ* means "knee"). In other places, for instance at Bayag, they use another means in order to make the head of the newborn child nicely round: a small squash, duly hollowed out and thoroughly dried, is placed over it in such a way as to fit it exactly.

The period of confinement differs in duration from place to place, and it probably depends very much on the state of the mother; this is perhaps also the reason why the number of days during which some taboos have to be observed, is not always and everywhere the same. In general, however, it may be said that the period of strict confinement does not go beyond one week; after that time, the mother first does some light chores in and around the house, and later on proceeds to her ordinary duties.

In some places she goes to the river (*mamáwa*) two days after the birth of her child; but usually this necessary formality is performed on the fifth day, even though for the rest she continues to remain at home for a much longer period. At Bayag, for instance, it takes her one month before she is allowed definitely to leave the house and to start cleaning the yard, although she made her ceremonial visit to the river on the usual day, the fifth after her delivery When going to the river the mother protects herself from either rain or sunshine by means of a *saríkaw* (a kind of large round flat hat made from palm leaves) In most places she goes there alone; in Bayag, however, she is accompanied by her husband, who also watches her while at work.

But what happens at the time of that visit to the river? What is meant by *mamáwa*? Here is what was told me by the generality of my informants, including Bayag people: the woman goes to the river

42 Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

854 As soon as the mother is allowed to attend to her ordinary duties,
431 her first concern is to take her child and visit her relatives, her own
796 as well as those of her husband. These are then obliged by custom to give the little one a small bracelet, which consists in a string of beads and is called *battá-*. In each house that is entered for that purpose, one such *battá-* is placed over the wrist of the babe. Besides, the relatives who live in the same settlement with the parents of the child, have to perform the *maxaníto* ceremony (communication with the spirits), at which a chicken is offered by the shaman, before the arrival of mother and child. This *maxaníto*, however, is dispensed with in the case of people who live in different agglomerations.

853 The mother (*magtaxíbi*) gives her child (*taxíbi*) the breast (*magpasóso*; in Iloko, *sóso* means "breast"; in Isneg "breast" is *xátat*) at every turn, and the little one has always its mother's milk at its disposition. No sooner does the baby cry than this is done, since, for an Isneg, the only plausible explanation is that it is hungry. As a rule, a child suckles its mother's breasts as long as it has not cut its first tooth, but even then you cannot call it really weaned: a little youngster running around freely may sometimes be seen partaking
[262] of the same food as his newborn brother or sister. On the other hand the little babe is given cooked rice to eat very early, usually after five days; however, as a matter of course, this solid food has been chewed by the complacent parent before it is put into the infant's mouth.

854 The baby when at rest is lying down either stretched out on a mat or a piece of cloth on the floor, or more frequently in a *dóyan*, which is a rectangular piece of cloth doubled up lengthwise so as to form a kind of pouch, each end of which is suspended from some part of the house, like a hammock, by means of two strings or strips of rattan, so that it can be used as a swing.

854 If Isneg parents have to leave a little child alone in the house,
776 they usually confide it to the care of *Daraxodáń*, a kind spirit, who is always at hand in such a predicament: he looks after the babe, without its elders knowing anything about it, and the little one never cries as long as he remains with it. Another spirit, *Laglagémiń*, who has the shape of a bird, is supposed to bring up any babies who are not well cared for by their parents; but although such children do not
[753 die while *Laglagémiń* looks after them, they always remain thin and
856] emaciated, which, of course, the Isneg do not consider as an ideal condition for an infant.

42: Vanoverbergh E-8 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

553 whoever be the person who suggested it. It is very clear though that the relatives, especially the old women, the more so if a shaman is among the latter, have a deciding vote in the matter, and that, in case of disagreement, an Isneg shaman or other old woman decides the question. But such occurrences must be rare, as the Isneg do not mind so much by what name their children are called provided they have one at the earliest opportunity. The parents, however, usually refrain from giving their child its name, as they believe that in such a case the baby would not grow up or at least would grow very slowly.

[856]

553 When baptizing an Isneg baby, we always give him some Christian
177 name of course, and I know of very few cases in which I myself was
551 not called upon to choose the name in question. Sometimes I had to
795 suggest several names, as some of them did not prove acceptable, but for this there was usually no other reason than that they were too hard for the Isneg either to pronounce or to remember. This new name is generally faithfully adhered to, although the original Isneg name is rarely forgotten and sometimes even remains preponderant; indeed a name is something much too important not to be taken into consideration. Actually many Isneg babies get a Christian name as their proper name from the outset, and so all difficulties and equivocations are eliminated at once.

That this indifference exists not only with reference to the name of a child that has to be baptized, but even with reference to the first name of any newborn babe, is evident from the fact that Christian Iloko or Kagayan school teachers are often called upon to suggest a name for the little one. So, at Ampaw for instance, which is a small agglomeration not so far from Nagbabalayan, we find a little boy called *Mabíni*, a name proposed by the teacher of the last-mentioned place at the suggestion of the father; now, even without knowing the person who gave the name, it is patent that such a name could not have been given by Isneg, as it is the family name of Mr. Apolinario Mabini, a Filipino hero of revolutionary war fame, of whom our Isneg know nothing at all. To complete the matter, I called the boy Apolinario at baptism.

551 It may be seen even from the above that any name will do. Nevertheless the Isneg also have their preference, and this especially in regard to three classes of names:

1. Names that have become traditional among the Isneg, "old names" as they call them. For instance *Súzdy*, which has no known

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

462 I: "Of course, why shouldn't you:"

He: "But I never did that; I do not know anything about it."

I: "That is very easy though; and you are not too old to learn. Can you not do like this?" [Here I mimicked the action of a woman who makes holes in the ground for planting the seeds].

He: "Wouldn't that be funny. Have you ever seen a man doing a woman's work?"

I: "I do not see anything funny about it, if you need to do so in order to live."

He: "No, sir, that is not our business; that is woman's work; without a woman we can do nothing. I cannot help it, but that is the custom. Woman's work for a woman, man's work for a man."

856 It is also a fact that boys help their father and girls their mother
861 as soon as they are able to do so. No sooner have they gained the
[868] required strength but they will be given some necessary implement in order to learn its use. Very often, especially in the case of the headax *(aliwa)* of men, which is of universal use and serves almost any purpose, the instrument at first will be a small or light one, provided it serves the purpose, to be superseded later on by a heavier one of the same nature. Whereas a child usually accompanies, first its mother, and later on one of its parents according to its sex, it is but natural that it should also offer them its help, as soon as it has gained sufficient strength. Although at first the help may be very slight and insignificant, the Isneg does not lose sight of the fact that this early exercise and practice will be of great benefit to the child, and that in the end it will accrue to his own advantage.

861 Imitative types of play are very little practised, as may be deduced from the above: the children very soon have to do the real thing, why should they occupy themselves with imitations? Nevertheless it may happen that they imitate in play a certain work which is still beyond their strength: so I have seen little Isneg girls playing at pounding and winnowing rice, with sand for rice, a small hole in the ground for a mortar, a stick for a pestle, and some large leaf for a winnow; [524] but these are exceptions, and not at all frequent ones. Incidentally it may be mentioned that dolls are unknown to our little Isneg maidens; a real child will be thrust upon them as soon as they are able to carry it.

462 And now as to the sundry occupations of the Isneg.

241 An Isneg is a farmer above anything else, so no wonder that agriculture is not only his chief pursuit, but also that which is taught